

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: DETENTION IN NIGERIA OF PROFESSOR BRUCE J. BERMAN

1. DEPARTMENT HAS JUST RECEIVED TWO DOCUMENTS FROM EMBASSY WHICH REFER TO WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF PROFESSOR BERMAN. (ONE IS MEMO OF SEPTEMBER 1 ENCLOSING COMMENTS BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR BRUCE ON RECENT HARASSMENT OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE OTHER IS INFO COPY OF AMBASSADOR EASUM'S SEPTEMBER 7 LETTER TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BALEWA.) DEPARTMENT HAD NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY AWARE THAT BERMAN CASE HAD COME TO ATTENTION OF EMBASSY.

2. BERMAN IS AMERICAN CITIZEN AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO, CANADA. DEPARTMENT RECEIVED LETTER FROM HIM ON AUGUST 11 INFORMING US ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE IN NIGERIA. HE ARRIVED IN LAGOS JULY 2 AND PROCEEDED SOON THEREAFTER TO VILLAGE OF UMUARO, IMO STATE, WHERE HE BEGAN

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SURVEY OF WORK, INCOME AND EXPENDITURE PATTERNS IN FAMILY COMPOUNDS. ON JULY 13 HE WAS ASKED TO VISIT POLICE IN OWERRI AND WAS INTERROGATED FOR SIX HOURS. HE WAS REQUIRED TO RETURN THE NEXT DAY UPON WHICH HE WAS PLACED IN DETENTION AND TAKEN TO LAGOS. HE WAS HELD IN A DETENTION CENTER NEAR CENTRAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN LAGOS FROM JULY 17

UNTIL JULY 24 AND DENIED PERMISSION TO CONTACT EITHER AMERICAN EMBASSY OR CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION. HE WAS TOLD ON JULY 23 THAT HE DID NOT HAVE PROPER "CLEARANCE" FOR HIS WORK, DESPITE PREVIOUS INQUIRIES HE HAD MADE TO NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN OTTAWA AND NIGERIAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN NEW YORK. NIGERIAN PRISONERS BEING HELD WITH BERMAN TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS FOURTH AMERICAN TO PASS THROUGH THE DETENTION CENTER SINCE THE BEGINNING OF JUNE.

3. BERMAN WAS ABLE TO FIND SPACE ON A FLIGHT TO LONDON IMMEDIATELY AFTER BEING RELEASED AND WAS THEREFORE UNABLE TO CONTACT THE EMBASSY OR THE HIGH COMMISSION BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM NIGERIA. HIS LETTER, SUMMARIZED ABOVE, CONTAINS FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCE. COPY IS BEING POUCHED TO EMBASSY.

4. DEPARTMENT REGRETS NOT HAVING INFORMED EMBASSY SOONER ABOUT BERMAN'S LETTER. ON OTHER HAND, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO KNOW ABOUT EMBASSY'S CONCERN FOR BERMAN AT TIME HIS CASE FIRST CAME TO EMBASSY'S ATTENTION.

ROBINSON

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